

[24/06/06][18:21:30] -

Title: Hartham's Wake

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The Wake for Hartham
the Trainer, slain by the
assassin's blade in Trinsic,
was held today.

CrawWorth did not
arrive when expected,
leading some to question
the emotional state of
the good Captain.

When, at last, he
did arrive, he delivered
the following eulogy for
Hartham: I thank thee
for attending this most
solemn occasion.

When lain to rest amidst
the earth of his home,
Hartham's spirit will no
doubt be lifted all the
higher by the presence of
caring souls such as thee.

Hartham's years of
service as head trainer,
his actions in the great
wars against the Orcs,
and all of his official
recognition are well
known.

They shan't be forgotten
soon. So, I see not the
point of recounting those
things.

Hartham himself did not
care for matters of
state, and loathed
rewards for a job he
felt simply should be
done.

So I will instead tell my
tale of how Hartham
impacted my life.

It is one of countless stories that many other Citizens could relay.

A tale I have never told another soul.

Tightly clasped around the neck of my person is a necklace, which Hartham once wore.

In my hand is an axe he gave me when I came of age.

These items mark the start of my relationship with Hartham.

When I was but a child, my family, friends, and ancestral home of Paws were destroyed by the Orcish clan Jugdath'Bru.

I know not of my Father's fate. He died with the ragtag defenders that tried their best to keep the Orcs from destroying our town.

My mother was left to defend the house, and myself.

It was nightfall when the Orcs broke through the defenders.

My mother secreted me away in a crawlspace in the kitchen floor used for storage. Through the slats in the floor I was able to see all that transpired.

My mother had steeled herself. Armed with a staff she learned how to use whilst a Guard in the service of Lord British, she protected the home.

When the bloodstained

Jugdath warriors broke
down the door, she felled
three before she was
subdued.

I have never cursed my
sight before, but now
would rather be blind
than have seen what
occurred.

I watched as they pinned
her to the wall with
spears.

I watched as they used
an axe to cut her in
half, from waist to skull.

I watched as they
laughed. I watched
carefully through the haze
of tears that silently
covered my face.

She never uttered a
whisper, save the curse
she laid upon them.

The Orcs began to talk
amongst themselves, I did
not understand them at
the time...but I gathered
that they knew there was
something else alive in
the room.

I backed to the very
rear of the crawlspace
unable to steal my gaze
away from the kitchen.

With snuffling noses they
attempted to pinpoint my
scent. The dull eyes of
one of the Orcs filled
the slats, and he uttered
a cry which, no doubt,
meant he had discovered
me.

It was at that moment a
huge crash was let out.
All I saw was a swinging
flash of gold. This
necklace, swinging around
the neck of the one
whom would rescue me.

A man, nay, a giant, in full plate mail, a huge black axe at his side, burst into the group of animals. The battle lasted perhaps a minute.

After he had made short work of the Orcs, he stopped to look at what remained of my mother's body. my lips.

Wiping a blood stained hand across his eyes, he caught the sound of my grief.

He pulled me from the crawlspac, stared at me carefully, and said, "Seems thou art the sole remaining citizen of Paws."

He thought for a second more before saying, "I am Hartham. Trinsic's finest have dispatched the Orcs. The Jugdath'Bru are but a stain now.

"Alas, thou art the only representative of Paws I am able to give this message to. If we could have arrived sooner I"

Hartham paused.

"Hast thou any family that lives? Perchance in another village?"

I shook my head.

"Then consider me your diplomatic escort to Trinsic. Being Paws official representative, you will need a guardian to protect thee in these troubled times." entire way to Trinsic.

Having no family of his own, Hartham raised me

as his only son. He
trained me in the art of
the warrior. He instilled
in me the virtues.

He provided me the tools
and skills I needed to
fulfill the promise I made
to myself when I watched
my mother's murder.

He is the reason I am.

May he rest at long last,
and experience naught but
good drink, and better
hunting.

May the virtues guide and
keep all of thee. Now
Drink! Feast! Make Merry!
Make Hartham's spirit
smile!

For I am as sure as I
breathe that he is
already long tired of this
sentimental speech. At
the end of this speech, a
mysterious figure
appeared in the tavern.
Unwilling to identify
himself he made an
ominous statement: Hear
me petty creatures
of order and fear.
Thine mewling, weak willed
virtues and suffocating
ideologues will at last be
lain to rest. Hartham was
the first course of a
meal whose consumption
WE will take a great
deal of pleasure in
experiencing. Lord British
would rather sacrifice all
of you for a mystical
truth he does not
understand.
Blackthorne would rather
rest on his station and
claim to follow a tenet
he will never truly grasp.

OUR reach has penetrated
the very strata of all
considered to be sacred
by thee. OUR influence

breathes down thine neck.

Hartham is an example of
what is to come.

WE only hope thou wilt
enjoy the next course of
OUR meal as much as
the appetizer.

All of your heroes, all of
your institutions, all of
your ORDER will FALL to
US.

WE are the ZOG CABAL.

WE are LEGION.

WE DEVOUR STRUCTURE.

AND GIVE BACK CHAOS.

MAKE YOUR PEACE
WITH LIFE.

FOR IT SHALL NEVER BE
THE SAME AGAIN.

He then abruptly
disappeared.